

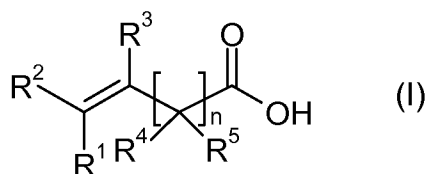
AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS:

The following claim set replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1 - 32. (Cancelled)

33. (Currently Amended) A composition for treating metal surfaces, comprising

- a) at least one copolymer as component A, synthesized from
 - aa) 50 to 99.9% by weight of (meth)acrylic acid or salts thereof as component Aa;
 - ab1) 0.1 to 50% by weight of a carboxylate-containing monomer of the formula I



in which the symbols have the following definitions:

n is 0 to 10,

R¹, R², and R³ independently of one another are hydrogen, C₁ to C₁₈ alkyl, which [[may be]] is branched or unbranched, C₃ to C₆ cycloalkyl, C₂ to C₁₈ alkenyl, which [[may be]] is branched or unbranched, C₃ to C₆ cycloalkenyl, C₆ to C₁₂ aryl, which [[may be]] is unsubstituted or substituted by alkyl substituents or [[other]] aryl substituents, ~~it being possible for the stated radicals~~ R¹, R² and/or R³ are optionally [[to be]]

substituted by at least one carboxyl group, or are a carboxyl group;

R^4 and R^5 are independently of one another hydrogen, C_1 to C_{18} alkyl, which ~~[[may be]]~~ is branched or unbranched, C_3 to C_6 cycloalkyl, C_2 to C_{18} alkenyl, which ~~[[may be]]~~ is branched or unbranched, C_3 to C_6 cycloalkenyl, C_6 to C_{12} aryl, which ~~[[may be]]~~ is substituted by alkyl substituents or ~~[[other]]~~ aryl substituents; or salts, anhydrides, esters of compounds of the formula I, with the exception of (meth)acrylic acid, with the exception of (meth)acrylic acid or salts thereof, as component Ab1;

and

ab2) optionally 0.1 to 50% by weight of monomers containing groups containing phosphoric and/or phosphonic acid or salts thereof, as component Ab2, and polymerizable with the monomers specified under aa) and ac), and also with component Ab1;

ac) 0 to 30% by weight of further comonomers polymerizable with the monomers specified under aa) and ab), as component Ac;

b) water or another solvent which dissolves, disperses, suspends or emulsifies the copolymer ~~capable of dissolving, dispersing, suspending or emulsifying the polymer~~ (component A), as component B;

c) ~~where appropriate, further~~ optionally surface-active additives, dispersants, suspension agents and/or emulsifiers as component C, and at least one acid or one alkali metal or alkaline earth metal salt of said acid selected from the group consisting of phosphoric acid, sulfuric acid, sulfonic acids, formic acid, acetic acid, nitric acid, hydrofluoric acid,

and hydrochloric acid, as component F, or zinc cations in the case that the metal surfaces are metal surfaces comprising zinc or zinc alloys.

34. (Previously Presented) A composition according to claim 33, wherein component Aa is acrylic acid or a salt of acrylic acid, component Ab1 is maleic anhydride, and component Ab2 is vinylphosphonic acid or methacrylic acid phosphonoxyethyl ester.

35. (Previously Presented) A composition according to claim 33, wherein as component A a copolymer synthesized from acrylic acid and maleic anhydride or a terpolymer synthesized from (meth)acrylic acid, maleic anhydride, and vinylphosphonic acid is used.

36. (Currently Amended) A composition according to claim 33, comprising further to components A, B, and, optionally where appropriate, C

d) ~~at least one nitrogen base, preferably at least one tertiary alkaline amine, more preferably at least one hydroxylamine, 3 dimethyl aminopropylamine and/or imidazole,~~ as component D.

37. (Currently Amended) A composition according to claim 33, comprising further to components A, B, optionally where appropriate C, and, ~~where appropriate,~~ optionally at least one nitrogen base as component D

e) at least one salt, acid or base based on transition metal cations, transition metal oxo anions, fluorometallates or lanthanoids as component E,
and/or

~~f) at least one acid or one alkali metal or alkaline earth metal salt of said acid selected from the group consisting of phosphoric acid, sulfuric acid, sulfonic acids, formic acid, acetic acid, nitric acid, hydrofluoric acid, and hydrochloric acid, as component F,~~

~~and/or~~

g) at least one [[further]] corrosion inhibitor as component G,

and/or

h) compounds of Ce, Ni, Co, V, Fe, Zn, Zr, Ca, Mn, Mo, W, Cr and/or Bi as component H,

and/or

i) [[further]] auxiliaries and additives as component I,

and/or

j) at least one complexing agent as component J,

and/or

k) [[further]] additives as component K.

38. (Currently Amended) A passivating layer on a metal surface, obtainable by contacting the metal surface with a composition comprising a [[polymer]] copolymer according to claim 33 ~~(component A)~~.

39. (Previously Presented) A passivating layer according to claim 38, whose thickness is $\leq 3 \mu\text{m}$.

40. (Previously Presented) A surface composed of a metal surface and a passivating layer according to claim 38.

41. (Currently Amended) A process for forming a passivating layer on a metal surface, wherein the metal surface is contacted with a composition ~~according to~~ as defined in claim 33.

42. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 41, wherein said contacting is effected by spraying, rolling or dipping methods.

43. (Currently Amended) A system on a metal surface comprising a passivating layer X according to [[claims]] claim 38 and one or more further coating films Y.

44. (Currently Amended) A process of forming a coating system comprising a passivating layer X and one or more further coating films Y, comprising the steps of:

- forming a passivating layer X by a process according to claim 41;
- coating the passivating layer.

45. (Currently Amended) A passivating layer on a metal surface, obtainable by contacting the metal surface with a composition comprising a [[polymer]] copolymer according to claim 35 ~~(component A)~~.

46. (Previously Presented) A passivating layer according to claim 45, whose thickness is $\leq 3 \mu\text{m}$.

47. (Previously Presented) A surface composed of a metal surface and a passivating layer according to claim 45.

48. (Currently Amended) A process for forming a passivating layer on a metal surface, wherein the metal surface is contacted with a composition ~~according to~~ as defined in claim 35.

49. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 48, wherein said contacting is effected by spraying, rolling or dipping methods.

50. (Currently Amended) A system on a metal surface comprising a passivating layer X according to [[claims]] claim 45 and one or more further coating films Y.

51. (Currently Amended) A process of forming a coating system comprising a passivating layer X and one or more further coating films Y, comprising the steps of:

- forming a passivating layer X by a process according to claim 48; coating the passivating layer.

52. (New) A composition according to claim 36, wherein the at least one nitrogen base is at least one tertiary alkaline amine.

53. (New) A composition according to claim 52, wherein the at least one tertiary alkaline amine is hydroxylamine, 3-dimethyl-aminopropylamine and/or imidazole.

54. (New) A composition according to claim 37, wherein the at least one nitrogen base is at least one tertiary alkaline amine.

55. (New) A composition according to claim 54, wherein the at least one tertiary amine is hydroxylamine, 3-dimethyl-aminopropylamine and/or imidazole.